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Trials of Capt. Joseph J. Knapp, Jr. and George Crowninshield, Esq. 1830

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TRIALS

OF

CAPT. JOSEPH J. KNAPP, JR.

AND

GEORGE CROWNINSHIELD, ESQ.

FOR THE

MURDER

Capt. Knapp at a tea party at Capt. White's, on the

night previous to the murder.

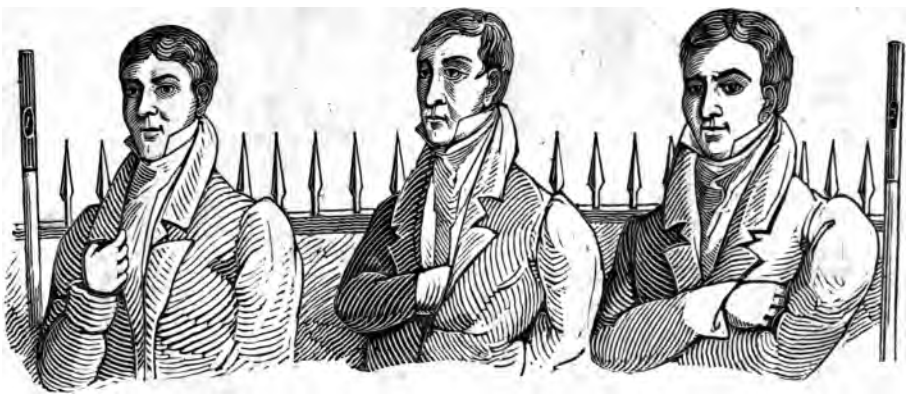
OF

CAPT. JOSEPH WHITE,

OF SALEM.

ON THE NIGHT OF THE SIXTH OF APRIL, 1830.

BOSTON,
PUBLISHED BY CHARLES ELLMS,
CORNER OF COURT AND MARKET STREETS.
1830.



J. F. KNAPP. J. J. KNAPP, Jr. GEO. CROWNINSHIELD.

Taken on their arraignment at the bar—by an eminent portrait painter.

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TRIALS, &c.

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT.

Present—

Hon. SAMUEL PUTNAM,
Hon. SAMUEL S. WILDE, } *Justices.*
Hon. MARCUS MORTON,

The court opened at Salem, Essex county, on Tuesday morning, November 9th, 1830.

Present, Judges Putnam, Wilde, and Morton. The Attorney and Solicitor General, together with the Hon Daniel Webster, attended on behalf of the government, as the conductors of the prosecution against Joseph Jenkins Knapp, Jr.

Counsel for the prisoner. Franklin Dexter and William H. Gardiner, Esqrs. of Boston.

At half after 10, A. M. Joseph Jenkins Knapp, Jr. was brought into court and placed at the bar for trial. The indictment was read by the clerk of the court, being the same which was found on the late trial of John Francis Knapp.

To this indictment, Joseph Jenkins Knapp, Jr. plead not guilty, and put himself upon God and his country for trial.

The clerk then proceeded to empannel the Jury, for the trial of Knapp, and the following jurors, after nine challenges, peremptorily, and thirty-three for cause, were sworn:

J. Emerson, Foreman; Wm. L. Balch; George Barker, Jr.; Jona. Hasson; John Choate, Jr.; Warren Currier; Joshua Hughes; William Hervey; Elijah Kimball; Jona. K. Smith; John Lefavour; Daniel Wardell.

The indictment was again read to the jury by the clerk, and the trial of Knapp then commenced.

Attorney General Morton opened the case for government nearly as follows:

May it please your Honors, and you Gentlemen of the jury;

Joseph Jenkins Knapp, Jr. the prisoner at the bar, stands charged in the indictment which has now been read, of being an accessory to the murder of the late captain White, of this town.

The murder of Capt. White, and the attrocious circumstances attending it, are so well known, not only in every part of the Commonweath, but throughout the United States, that it will not be necessary to dwell upon its enormity, or even to enter into a minute detail of the incidents connected with it. It is well known to you, gentlemen of the jury, that John Francis Knapp, the brother of the prisoner at the bar, has, during the past summer, been arraigned, tried, convicted, sentenced, and executed as principal in the murder of Captain White. Had not John Francis Knapp been convicted as principal, not only him, but the prisoner at the bar, and all others concerned in this murder, must have escaped the hands of justice, at least in this world. In my official capacity, I gave the Rev. Mr. Coleman authority, soon after the arrest of the two Knapps, to receive the free and voluntary confession of either of them as to their agency in the murder, and with the understanding, that whichever so confessed, should be recommended to Executive clemency. The prisoner at the bar did make a full and voluntary confession to Mr. Coleman, and with permission of the court I will now call on that gentleman to state what that confession was, and under what circumstances it was obtained.

Mr. Coleman sworn. The witness stated that the confessions obtained from the prisoner at the bar, were given by him without compulsion, fear, promise or inducement, except the pledge given by the Attorney-General, which was shown Knapp before the confessions were taken. [Here the *counsel for the prisoner* rose and protested against the admissibility of any confessions made by their client, inasmuch as they were obtained by menace and the hope of reward, as they were ready to show. *Dexter* further objected to any part of the confession being given, or the contents of the paper referred to in any manner whatever.]

Morton, Attorney-General, stated, that the paper contained an account of the murder, authenticated on every page, containing nine pages, by the hand writing of the prisoner, and accompanied by a note in the hand writing of Joseph Jenkins Knapp, Jr., stating that he had done it without pledge or bribe, or solicitation of any person whatever. If that was not to be introduced, he did not know what could be given in evidence.

Mr. Gardiner was about going on to argue against the admissibility of the confession, when Judge Putnam remarked, that all the facts relating to the mode in which they were obtained should be first known, and accordingly

Mr. Coleman was again called, and testified. I first heard of the arrest of the Knapps on Thursday morning, the twenty-seventh, but I did not visit him that day, but went on Friday morning. I consulted, previously, with some of the gentlemen of the Committee of Vigilance, in regard to visiting them, and in regard to the charges alleged against them. I obtained their consent to visit the prisoners. I went first to the house of Capt. Joseph J. Knapp, senior, and saw Mrs. Knapp, the wife of Joseph J. Knapp, junior, Mrs. Beckford, her mother, Miss Phippen, the house-keeper, Capt. Knapp, Samuel Knapp and Phippen, and conversed with the family.

I went to the prison with the knowledge and approbation of the family. I had been informed that the prisoner was to be arraigned at ten o'clock before a justice, and I went a little before ten and waited. After he had been arraigned and committed, I asked permission to go into his cell and went in. I told him I was much distressed,—that I was sorry for his situation, and if I could render him any service which it was proper for me to render, he might command me. He asked me if I thought they could prove it. I told him I did not know any thing about it, other than what certain gentlemen, in whom I had great confidence, had told me, that in their opinion the evidence was conclusive. I asked him who Palmer was. He told me he did not know. I told him I did not know what could be done; but if any thing could be obtained for him, and if he saw fit, and thought he could rely upon my honor to make any disclosures to me, he might be sure they should never be divulged—I would die first, until I had obtained the security of the government. (He referred to the opinion expressed on the former trial, that a confession made to a clergyman was sacred—but don't recollect mentioning that opinion to the prisoner.)

I charged him if he was innocent, by no means, in any way to involve himself,—he must be the judge of that. He asked me again, and I think repeatedly, if they could prove it, and I answered him as before, that I did not know. He sat on the bed and drew close. He looked up to the wall, and I looked up, and saw a crevice, from which the saw dust appeared to have fallen. He appeared to be anxious not to be overheard, and this excited my suspicions, and I asked him who occupied that cell. He told me George Crowninshield was overhead. He told me he had let down a pencil and paper through the crevice, and showed it to me. But little else passed at the first interview—a good deal of the time he said nothing. As I was going out, he asked me if I would see his wife and return again. I had got to the door, and I left him and went to the house of Capt. Knapp, senior, where I saw the same persons I had seen before.

I returned to the cell about three o'clock on the same day; very much the same conversation passed, with the addition, that I then told him that the gentlemen, of whom I had before spoken, had authorized me to use their names. I mentioned Mr. Chase, Dr. Barstow, and Mr. Fettyplace, as having given the opinion that the evidemce was decisive. He asked me what I thought. I told him I did not know, but thought he would find it very difficult to account for those letters—I referred to two letters put into the Post Office and traced to him. He asked me if I thought they would bring Palmer up. I understood him to ask it at the suggestion of some one in the cell above, but whether Richard or George Crowninshield I am unable to say. I gave him my belief that they would. I told him I was nearly exhausted—indeed I was oppressed with grief and anxiety, and that I must leave him—that I could do no more—could offer him no bribe—would not persuade him—he must act on his own responsibility—I had discharged my conscience. After sitting a few moments without any thing being said, I got up to leave him, thinking there was an end of the business; when I got to the door, he asked me if I would see his father and brother, and come with them to the prison, I told him I would, and made an appointment with the jailor to let me in at five o'clock. I saw his father and brother, and mentioned to them his request; they desired I would not go to the cell again, because it would be said the prisoner was making a confession, did not intend to go to the

prison again, because I expected an apology to be made for me; but I saw Mrs. Knapp, Mrs. Beckford, and Jo. Beckford going that way, and went and spoke to them in the chaise. Jo. Beckford came and said Mr. Knapp wanted to see me, soon after Mr. Brown came and repeated the same thing, then I said I would go, and went in.

I ought to have stated that in the second interview, I told him that application had been made for a pardon for Palmer. Before the third interview, I had seen a letter to Mr. Waters, requesting an answer immediately to that request. I then stated to him, that if any thing was done, it must be done that day. There was another thing at the second interview. I had inquired of counsel, whether, if a person confesses, and if it did not commit the accomplices, it would avail to the safety of the individual; and I gave him the opinion of Mr. Merrill, that it would, provided it was done in good faith. He then without any other preparation beckoned me to go into a corner of the cell, and in a low tone of voice, he disclosed to me—

Here *Mr. Coleman* was stopped by the court, and told not to go into any disclosures made by the prisoner—he afterwards stated, in answer to questions by defendant's counsel,

That he told the prisoner he would do all in his power to obtain for him the privilege of making confession and of being state's witness, at the second interview.

And that after he left the prison the third time, he did not see the prisoner till he returned from Boston, with the Attorney General's authority.

Also, that he did not tell the prisoner that Mr. Merrill said a pledge could be obtained—and that there was an endorsement on the back of a copy of the pledge, which was shown to Phippen Knapp, and shown to the prisoner, that if there was any prevarication, or denial, or retraction, (in very strong terms) the pledge would avail nothing.

Dexter and Gardiner then argued at length against the admission of Knapp's confessions, on the ground that they were obtained under the influence of hope and fear, and a direct promise, and were therefore inadmissible as evidence. A great number of authorities were cited, and it was contended that the doctrine that a man could be convicted on his own confessions, if he refused to testify, was not supported by good authority, and should not therefore have any weight in a case

involving the life or death of a fellow creature. With these views they prayed the court to rule out the confessions said to have been made by the prisoner.

The court here adjourned to the following morning, in order to hear the arguments of the government in favor of its admission.

Wednesday, Nov. 10.

The Court met at 9 o'clock, when the trial proceeded.

Mr. Webster, on behalf of government, contended that the confessions made to the Rev. Mr. Coleman by the prisoner at the bar, were not given either through fear or hope of reward. The moment the faith of the government was pledged to him by the Attorney General, he had nothing to fear, for whether by his confessions any others were convicted or not, he was held perfectly harmless, and could never be prosecuted and brought to trial, on account of any agency he might have had in the murder. He was therefore secured, let the result be what it might, and consequently no possible inducement could have been held out to him to make these confessions, other than his own safety. Several authorities were cited in support of this position, and the court required further time, before giving its decision on so important a feature of the trial. In the mean time, by consent of parties, the trial proceeded, with an understanding that the decision of the court would be made known early on the following day.

Mr. Webster then proceeded to call the witnesses to prove the several allegations declared in the indictment.

The first witness called was

Benj. White, servant to the late Joseph White, who testified that on coming down stairs on the morning of 7th of April last, he saw one of the back windows open and a plank placed against it. Thought some one had broken into the house during the night. Went and called the housekeeper, Miss Kimball, who slept in the room over Mr. White's; then went to inform Mr. White himself. This was half past 6 o'clock in the morning. On entering Mr. White's room, he found him lying in his bed, apparently dead; that he ran to summon several of the neighbors to give the alarm;—and also various particulars of the situation of the house, &c.

Miss Lydia Kimball, a domestic in Mr. White's family, corroborated the testimony of Benj. White.

Dr. Johnson testified to his being called on the morning of the murder, and related the particulars of the state of the body when he first examined it. He found ten wounds in and about the heart, apparently made by a dirk or some other sharp instrument. Examined it in about thirty-six hours afterwards and found three more stabs. Thought at first Mr. White had been dead three or four hours, but on further reflection, imagined he might have been murdered eight or ten hours, or even more.

Katharine Kimball saw the body of Mr. White on the morning the murder was discovered, and assisted in laying it out and making the necessary preparations previous to its being placed in the coffin.

Mr. Deeland testified that after the body was laid out, he found the key of the street front door, otherwise the key of the entry door, under the sofa covering. The reason of the inquiry for this, was to keep the people out, who, after the murder, were rushing in from all quarters: this was wanted to keep the people out. Somebody, between half past twelve and one, called at Mr. White's, and inquired for him, but he had gone to the farm—he did not know who it was.

Mr. Lewis Endicott. Knows the prisoner at the bar. Sometime in February last had a conversation with him in the reading room in Salem, respecting the recent illness of Capt. White, and the amount of property he would probably leave at his death. Knapp told him that he had seen his will, and that there was but one witness to it. On witness expressing a doubt on this subject, Knapp observed, 'black and white will not lie.' The conversation then turned on general subjects, the purport of which he does not recollect.

John W. Treadwell. Knows Mrs. Beckford and her niece. Mrs. Beckford was the housekeeper of Mr. White. She was the only heir of her sister, and had two daughters, one of whom married J. J. Knapp, jr. and one Davis. Her brother had one child, Stephen White, who then was living at Boston, at the Tremont House. He was one of the Committee of Vigilance, occupied in bringing affairs to light. Agents were employed throughout the Commonwealth. Thought that the Bar of Essex were not generally employed; but it was a subject of general interest.

Benjamin Leighton testified, that he had overheard a conversation between the Knapps at Wenham—he lives with Mr.

Davis at Mrs. Beckford's place—was at Wenham where she has resided since the murder of Capt. White, and Mr. J. J. Knapp's family resided there. I lived there since the 6th of October last—they came there about the same time. While I was there and about a week before the murder, I overheard a conversation, after dinner, when I went to the lower end of the avenue, and sat down near the wall to rest, near the gate. I there heard the two Knapps in conversation, the following being the words, as near as I can recollect. J. J. Knapp. When did you see Dick? J. F. Knapp. This morning. J. When is he going to kill the old man? F. I don't know. J. If he don't kill him soon I won't pay him. They turned back, and I heard no more. This was the Friday before the murder. I never told any one that I had heard any such conversation. I knew the two Knapps, and cannot have mistaken the conversation I have related. (On question of his age,) I am 18 years, December next; never saw Richard Crowninshield to know him. Francis came to Wenham, to see Joseph, after the murder once, but I do not know the day; he came about 9 o'clock P. M. It was about two or three weeks before he came there to live; Mrs. Beckford was there, and a gentleman was at the door, in a chaise. Joseph was at home; Francis got out of the chaise, and asked if Joseph was at home. Mrs. Beckford said yes—inside at the middle door, Joseph met him; they shut the door, and were together an hour. I went to the door with a light. The house is on a lane; could not tell which way they went, after leaving the house.

Cross Examined.

The house is about fifty rods from the road—the conversation between Joseph and Francis was at the lower end of the pasture; Mr. Davis, Joseph and Frank were at Wenham. J. and F. Knapp were at the gate next to the house. I went down the avenue, and they went out into it. I was taking a little nooning, (on being asked its meaning, he said,) basking in the sun, waiting for Mr. Davis—it is customary thus to do among laborers, to take a nooning. The facts of this conversation he did not tell Mr. Davis, or any body else—he never was called upon to testify. Mr. ——and another called upon me, and requested me to go to Mr. Waters's office. I told them I knew nothing about the affair. I have always said I knew nothing about it. They stopped at the gate, by the

house, and I passed by them—they saw which way I passed; instead of going to work I sat down. Mr. Davis, who lived in the house, came along soon after, but I said nothing about it to him. Afterwards he was carried to Mr. W.'s office, and was told to stay in town. I left the two Knapps standing by the gate in front of the house; I did not go into the road, but went down the avenue into the pasture; I did not turn, but kept on straight down the avenue.

The avenue is in view from the house, but not from the gate. The gate is in the fence which parts the avenue where the Knapps stood. The avenue narrowed near the house, and the gate is about forty feet from the door. From the house to the wall where I got over, about fifty rods. I have tried it, and know they could not see me. I tried from fear that they would kill me if they had seen me—if they had known that I had heard them—or knew that I had sat down there behind the wall. If they had seen me get over the wall, they could have told that I sat down there. A week on Thursday I first saw Mr. Waters. A man from Lynn brought me with a summons, and said the Court was sitting. He took me to W.'s office, and questioned me. I told him I could not recollect any thing. I do not remember that I said that I knew nothing about it. I went there at 11 o'clock, and they kept me until 2, P. M. They asked me if I knew any thing about Francis Knapp? I said I did not. About Richard Crowninshield? I said I did not. At 2 o'clock, I went to the tavern. They told me I had told Sterrett. I did not remember it.

The conversation did not frighten me. Mr. Sterrett told W. that I had told him so, and I did not remember it. They said that I must recollect it; they would make me recollect it, when I came to court. I told W. if he would come up next day, I would tell them all I could remember. I then remembered what I have now testified, but did not mean to tell. I went to Mr. W.'s office again, about 5, P. M.—they told me I must come. Sterrett and W. were at the office. Sterrett said he remembered what I had said. I said I could not. They said Sterrett and Dr. Kilham heard me, and I must recollect. They did not question me any further. I was there an hour or more. They told me I should be brought to court, and I must remember what I had said. I told Sterrett without thinking what I said. I saw Mr. W. again last Saturday, at Lummus's tavern—Mr. Choate and Mr. Treadwell.

S. called me down. They wanted me to tell all I knew. I then recollected what I had told Sterrett: I could not recollect the conversation in Salem, because it was a strange place. I believe I was asked but once at Lummus's—I told them at once. No one told me that they had a warrant for me. I was going to picking rocks, when I heard the Knapps talking—looked round and saw them. I looked round the end of the wall, through the gate. I was about twenty-five rods off, when I first heard them;—they came to within three or four feet of the wall. After they had stopped, they said what I have related. I had no idea of what it was about. I never mentioned it to any one. Davis did not find me there. I went to my work, picking rocks.

The man who came to Wenham, with John Francis Knapp was a slim man. The night was dark—chaise up. I did not mention this before the murder, because I did not think of it; it was not told by me.

Answer to Webster's questions.

Sterrett keeps store. I went in the morning, after the murder—he says, 'what is the news of the murder?' I said, they think I don't know any thing about the murder, but I guess I do know more than they think for. I did not mean to say any thing, for fear if the two Knapps got free, they would kill me; and because, after the murder, F. Knapp used to draw his dirk from his bosom and prick me. I first told the conversation to Thomas Hart; then to Waters. After I went from Salem, I told Sterrett, that I had overheard a conversation.

Gardner and Dexter. I have known Francis since he came home from sea. Since his attack at Wenham Pond, he has carried a dirk—that was after the murder. Next morning after the murder, I did not tell.

Thomas Hart. Lived with Mrs. Beckford, at Wenham—went there the 9th of April. Joseph J. Knapp hired him—knows John Francis Knapp. Mrs. Beckford went there to live 15th of April afterward. Frank went about the 28th of April—saw him there the 25th of April last, about dark, on Saturday evening. He came alone at 7, in the evening. He saw the Capt. (J. J. K.) and was with him about a quarter of an hour—they were alone in a room together. Francis wore a hat and a camblet wrapper. There was no peculiar money given him, or of a peculiar stamp, except that on the Tuesday after, some five franc pieces were given him to buy meal with.

He thought he heard three voices in the chaise, at the time spoken of—was confident of it when it was going away at half past 7. Francis Knapp usually wore a dagger, and used to prick Benjamin with it, telling him, at the same time, it would not hurt him but a minute; he would come into Benjamin's room to do this, when he was in bed. This was after the murder.

Lummus—Keeps a public house at Wenham, near where Joseph Jenkins Knapp, Jr. formerly resided. Has seen him frequently before, used to stop in at his house occasionally with his brother Frank. Knew nothing of the murder until he read an account of it in the papers. Never suspected the Knapps concerned, was astonished when he heard of their arrest. Dick Crowninshield has often been to his house, &c.

The court here adjourned to the following day.

Thursday morning.

The court met at 1–4 before 10 o'clock. The question of the admissibility of Knapp's confessions were considered of the deepest influence as to the issue of the trial, and accordingly the anxiety to learn the decision of the court upon the point was so great, that at a very early hour in the morning, the court-house, within and without, was thronged by a great multitude of persons, attracted perhaps by no other motive than mere curiosity. After mature deliberation, Judge Putnam stated the court were unanimously of the opinion, that inasmuch as no proof was produced that the confessions were given Mr. Coleman through any feelings of hope or fear, it was proper evidence, and as such, might be brought forward, and read on trial. Mr. Webster then called

Mr. Coleman again, who stated that the confessions were in writing, and each page of them were signed by the prisoner at the bar.

Gardiner asked if the written paper purporting to be the prisoner's confessions were the exact words used by him when it is said he confessed. Witness answered yes, as nearly as his words could be reduced to writing.

The confessions were then read by the Attorney General, but as the substance of them is well known to the public, we deem it unnecessary to introduce them here. After the reading of these confessions, which occupied a considerable length of time, the court proceeded to the examination of witnesses.

Gideon Barstow was chairman of the Committee of Vigilance. A letter signed 'Grant' was taken out of the Salem post-office and handed him by his son sometime in June last. Witness identified the letter on its being handed him by Mr. Webster.

Joseph Grant, Jr. is clerk in the Salem post-office, and remembers delivering the letter alluded to above, and also one in the same hand writing addressed to Hon. Stephen White. Did not at the time know who they were from, or what their contents were. Don't know the prisoner.

Mr. Webster here produced two threatening letters; one addressed to the Hon. Stephen White, of May 12, 1830, demanding $500, or suffer. Signed N. Blackstone, 4th; and the other, to Hon. Gideon Barstow, Salem, threatening him with assassination, unless he 'sent him money.' Signed 'Grant.' Dated May 13, 1830. Then followed a letter, which was read by Mr. Webster, (said to be Palmer's) dated May 13, 1830, postage 18 3-4 cents, directed to the father of J. J. and J. F. Knapp, threatening the father with exposure of all his plans, as he knew them; which letter evidently was intended for the son; and threatening that the whole business should leak out, and signed Charles Grant, jr. Maine.

John A. Southwick, cashier of the American Bank, in passing through Brown street, on the night previous to the murder, near the rope walks, about half past nine, P. M. saw a young man sitting on the steps of the rope walk—he (witness) had left his father's house, and was on his return home; the young man as he passed him, dropped his head—he passed him three times, but could not get an opportunity to see his face. His dress was a camblet cloak, and a glazed cap, without fur on it. He then took it to be J. Francis Knapp; he had known him before, was brought up a few houses from him. After passing him the last time, I went into the house, and came out again, and saw the same person.

Same witness continued, saw the same person when he came out of Downing's. When Mr. Bray came up to him, he (Bray) observed, that he also had seen a suspicious looking person on certain steps; and also saw him standing at the corner of Mrs. Shepherd's house. Saw him leaning over a post there, and passed him on the opposite side of the street: walked down a little ways, and went into the western yard of Mr. Bray's, which was a single house; the front on the north side;

we went into the back door, and up into Mr. Bray's chamber. When we went up, he was standing at the post, opposite the house. We went in at the back door. While in Mr. Bray's chamber, one half the blind was shut. I kept back. Mr. Bray went to the window. Another person came up, and passed along with him to the westward. On looking out of the west window, we saw one running across the street, and turn the corner, and the other run round the rope walk, towards the common. We left the chamber, and went that way round up Williams street, to find them. I parted with Mr. Bray at his house. I mentioned to my wife what I had seen, and told her, that I thought the person to be J. F. Knapp.

Cross Examined.

It was about half past 10 that I saw them. I am not certain at what time I left my father's house. The person whom I thought to be J. F. Knapp, when I passed him, was not more than two or three feet off from me. I did not speak to him; neither do I always speak to him, say not more than three fourths of the time. Sometimes he evades speaking to me. He wore at this time a camblet cloak and glazed cap; and I did not see his face, though I can swear to the camblet cloak. He was sitting down at the time. The night was cloudy, the moon full, and the atmosphere misty at 10 o'clk.

Daniel Bray described his house; corroborated the last witness, as to its having been on the 6th of April. He said that on that evening, he saw a man, at a late hour, with a dark frock coat on, very full at the bottom and top, with shining buttons, going down on one side of Brown Street; he saw another man peeping down Howard Street. Before I got to him, I found it was John Southwick. I asked him what he was out so late for. He said that he saw a man sitting upon the ropewalk steps, of very suspicious appearance. I pointed the man out to him; it was light enough to see him. I did not like the looks of the man. The wind was blowing fresh and cold at that time, and we went under the lee of the ropewalk to get out of it. The man passed us, and took station near a post, at the N. E. corner of my house. We went to see what he was after, and passed into my gate, within twenty feet of him, and then up chamber, because the sliding shutters below, would make a noise. We then saw him standing at the post. In five or six minutes, another came up, and I was witness of their meeting. There was no bowing passed be-

tween them, or other ceremony of introduction. They stood as near each other as the post would permit; perhaps one and a half feet into the street, and were there about a minute. One person, who came from the east, was dressed in light clothes, the other in dark. The one in light, ran down Howard Street, the other ran in an opposite direction, and both were soon out of sight. I saw a wagon going east, towards Beverly, at a common pace; it was an open wagon. I went down as far as Williams Street. I have not known the prisoner since he was a boy; but the size of one of the persons I saw, agrees with his. On going into Williams Street, I looked into the grave yard, to ascertain whether I could see the missing person. This was about thirty or forty minutes after I met Mr. Southwick. From Downing's steps, was the most favorable place to see the lights in Mr. White's house, and for watching their extinction. From there, one could see the western window, where White was said to have slept, when he was murdered.

Cross Examined.

From the post at the corner, or ropewalk steps, one cannot see the lights before mentioned. I cannot recollect when Southwick told me that he thought Francis J. Knapp was the man seen at the post.

Capt. Kinsman resides in Brown Street. Two days after the murder, I went to Brown Street, to ascertain from what point in Brown Street I could see the windows of Capt. White's house. At the corner of Downing's house, there was no buildings to intercept the view of Capt. White's windows or chamber over his sleeping room. I could see the windows as far as 18 or 20 paces from Downing's steps. There was a private passage to the back part of the house.

Capt. Chase corroborated the last witness.

Stephen Merrick does not know F. Knapp; lives in last house in Brown Street, before you go into Newbury Street; on the north side, opposite Mr. Andrews; about 15 minutes before 9 o'clock, on the night of the murder, saw a person standing at the post opposite my shop. Had a fair view of him; did not know who he was, but as he appeared waiting or looking for some one, I was induced to notice his movements; stood there, moving but little, till the bell rang for 9 o'clock; after that time, I closed my shutters as usual; I left the slide out of my door to see if any one joined him; after

waiting half an hour went home; had on a light frock coat; don't know what he had on his head.

Cross Examined.

First time ever saw the prisoner; court was not sitting when he was brought before the grand jury. I was in the street, and saw him in the chaise; there were three chaises, he was in one of the three; had on a light coat; he was pointed out to me and described and name told.

Question by Govt. Prisoner is the same person who was in one of the chaises. Don't remember asking any thing about them, but accidentally overheard the description of them from a person standing near me.

Peter E. Webster testified that on going from his shop in Essex street. to his place of residence, on the night of the murder, he saw a man standing in Brown street, whom at the time he believed to be Frank Knapp. Has never had any cause to alter that opinion.

Mr. Coleman was again sworn, and identified the club, which he took out from under the meeting house steps the day on which Knapp's confessions were made.

Dexter closed for the defendant. In rising, he said, to address the present jury, he did not feel that he had to contend against such a tremendous weight of prejudice, as on the recent trial of the brother of the prisoner at the bar. He knew that he had now to deal with an impartial and an intelligent jury; a jury that would not let a hair of the prisoner's head be injured, unless they were convinced, beyond a reasonable doubt, of his guilt. He asked for his client justice, and nothing but justice, and on this alone, was he willing to stand or fall. The learned counsel then went into an elaborate and able defence for the prisoner, which occupied nearly three hours and a half. We have neither time nor disposition to write the notes out we took of Mr. Dexter's defence. Suffice it to say, it was worthy his high reputation as an able reasoner and an enlightened and powerful lawyer.

It being nearly 7 o'clock, the Court adjourned to the following day.

Friday Morning.

The court met at half-past 9 o'clock. Morton, Attorney General, informed the court that Mr. Webster, with their permission, would now close the cause on behalf of the government.

Mr. Webster then rose, and after briefly alluding to the objections which had been made by the defendant's counsel to his appearing in this trial, proceeded to close the defence. We have arrived, said he, to the second, and would to God it were the last act, of a dark and bloody tragedy, which for its enormity finds no parallel in the long history of crime. The prisoner at the bar has already caused the death of three individuals; first, the aged victim of this conspiracy—second, Richard Crowninshield, who perished by his own hands—and thirdly, John Francis Knapp, his younger brother. He is now placed at the bar with his own life in jeopardy, and you, gentlemen of the jury, are to pass between him and the government. This is not all. Another young man is lying in jail, charged with having participated in the same crime, and is, perhaps, this very day, to be tried for his life. Here Mr. Webster entered somewhat at length into a review of the testimony, as given in the case, and stated what his opinions of the law were, as applicable to the cause under consideration. The conclusion of Mr. Webster's remarks were very able, and as near as we can recollect, were as follows. Gentlemen of the jury, a crime has been committed within this quiet town, which for coolness, and cold-blooded barbarity, stands alone in the calendar of human depravity. No country nor age can produce its parallel, the whole world records not its equal; whenever in after times, our children shall read of this murder, they will shudder at the thought, that the assassin and his confederates were all sons of New England—reared up under our religious and moral institutions, and of respectable and affluent families. In whatever light we view this murder, we can find no bright spot about it; all is dark, dismal, and bloody. The unhappy man at the bar is emphatically encompassed by a sea of blood. There was no burst of passion in the perpetrator to soften the atrocity of the deed; all was done calculatingly, calmly, coolly, and skilfully. There was no lion of passion in his path; the object was money—the crime murder—the price blood; the tale of silver was counted out, the price fixed; here is the money, there is the victim. Here is a new face given to murder, a new character given to the grim visage of Moloch; no knitted brow, no bloodshot eye of passion disfigured the countenance of the assassin; but all was calm, smooth, and unruffled; no common mark of depravity was there, the venomn was deep as it was infernal; there was no

rushing of blood to the face, but all was done in deliberation of purpose, and with consummate skill of execution. The truth here could hardly be credited, but still every fact would be placed beyond dispute; the villain could almost be seen entering the house, treading the deserted rooms, ascending on feathers, alone, the noiseless stairs; opening with stealthy and velvet tread the chamber of his sleeping victim; watching beneath the moonlight the gray hairs of the sleeper, visible in the breeze; we could almost hear the fatal blow; witness the poignard repeatedly driven to his heart; the aged arm raised by the assassin to repeat his aim; its restoration to its original position; the smoothing of the bed clothing; the feeling of the pulse to be certain that all was safe; the retraversing of his guilty steps; the escape; no eye but the Allseeing One to mark his guilt, and he sole master of his own terrible secret. But for the murderer, there was no corner of creation wherein he could be safe; though he take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost part of the seas, discovery is there. Not to speak of the eye that sees every where, human murder to human vision will be known. A thousand eyes, a thousand ears, are marking and listening, and thousands of excited human beings are watching his blood-stained steps. The proofs of discovery will go on; the murderer bears with him a secret which he can neither carry or discharge; he feels his incapacity, and the secret which he possesses, possesses him, and like the evil spirit spoken of in olden time leads him wither-soever it will. It is a vulture, ever gnawing at his heart; he believes his every thought to be heard; there is no escape but in confession or suicide, and suicide is confession. It might not be that every case was like this, but most generally was it thus, and almost every case like this, was illuminated in its whole train by one spark of evidence kindling the mass of undisputed testimony.

Gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner is now in your hands. I ask of you to judge him in mercy, but in making up your judgment to remember that we must be protected in our dwellings and our beds. His crime is of an awful and aggravated nature, and it remains for you to say what shall be his punishment. If guilty, you will say so; if not guilty you will say so, and no more.

After the charge of Judge Putnam, the papers were given to the jury, who retired just before 2 o'clock P. M. to agree upon a verdict.

The jury came into court at quarter past 9 on Saturday morning. On being asked by the clerk if they had agreed upon a verdict, they replied in the affirmative. The clerk then asked who should speak for them; they answered, the foreman.—What say you, Mr. Foreman, continued the clerk, is Joseph Jenkins Knapp, Jr. the prisoner at the bar, guilty or not guilty. G U I L T Y, was the dread reply. When the word Guilty escaped the lips of the Foreman, a slight alteration in the prisoner's countenance was observed by those who sat near him, but it was only for a moment; his self-possession came to him in an instant. The court immediately after the verdict was pronounced, ordered the prisoner to be remanded to wait his sentence.

TRIAL OF

GEORGE CROWNINSHIELD.

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT.

Present—

Hon. SAMUEL PUTNAM,
Hon. SAMUEL S. WILDE, } *Justices.*
Hon. MARCUS MORTON,

The Court met at salem, Essex County, on the 12th day of November. The forenoon was occupied in closing the trial of Joseph Jenkins Knapp, jr. At 3 o'clock, P. M. George Crowninshield was placed at the bar for trial. On the indictment being read, he was asked by the Clerk if he was guilty or not guilty of the charges therein contained, to which he replied "Not guilty, so help me God." He was then asked how he would be tried, he answered, in the usual form "by God and his country." The following Jurors were then sworn to try the cause, viz.

Edward Ford, Foreman; Samuel G. Ashton; Jacob Bacheldor; Enoch Bradley, Jr.; Nathaniel Bordman; Asa Cole; Asa Currier; Aaron Day; Isaac Dodge; Benjamin Edwards; Dudley Evans; Samuel P. Fowler.

Hon. Mr. Hoar, of Concord, and Ebenezer Shillaber, Esq. of Salem, appeared as counsel for the prisoner.

Solicitor General Davis, opened the case on the part of the Government. He began by stating that he expected to prove George Crowninshield, the prisoner at the bar, one of the conspirators concerned in the murder of Mr. White on the 6th of April last, that in the words of the indictment, he aided and abetted in this murder; that although not present when it was committed, he knew of the conspiracy and took part in it. He

expected further to prove, that the prisoner at the bar, made a proposition to another to murder Mr. White, and offered him a certain sum to commit the deed. Without wishing unnecessarily to occupy the time of the Court, he would proceed immediately to the examination of witnesses.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, Miss Lydia Kimball, Benjamin White and Benjamin Leighton, were then sworn, and testified precisely as on the trial of the two Knapps. We think it unnecessary to repeat this evidence, as it will be found in the preceding pages.

Saturday Morning.

John C. R. Palmer. [This is the witness who brought to light the whole conspiracy of the murder by writing an anonymous letter signed "Grant" addressed to Joseph J. Knapp, demanding a certain sum of money or threatening him with violence. He is a young man of notorious bad character and has recently been an inmate of Maine State Prison.]

Solicitor General asked—Do you know the prisoner at the bar? *Ans.* Yes. Did you know Richard and George Crowninshields? *Ans.* Yes. I have been at their house in Danvers, have seen Francis Knapp there twice. The first time was in the afternoon of April last, about 2 o'clock, P. M. and another man by the name of Allen with Richard. I saw him from the chamber window—Francis Knapp and Richard Crowninshield went away together. I did not see them again till after 4 o'clk. Four o'clock that day saw them again on horseback. Allen and Knapp went away, saw the two Crowninshields after Knapp went away. They came into the chamber. We talked about the proposed murder of Capt. White. Both Richard and George talked about it. George proposed to me to be concerned in it, in the presence of Richard. They offered me one third of the money to be concerned in the murder. This was to be paid by J. J. Knapp, Jr. Richard said it would be easy to meet him that night and upset his carriage. They knew that he had gone out to his farm. Jo Knapp's object was to have a will destroyed. George said that I was poor and it would be a good time to supply my wants. He intimated no other time for committing the murder, and said that the housekeeper would be absent from the house at the time the murder was committed. Frank Knapp came again between seven and eight o'clock, P. M. in a chaise alone, and staid half an hour. Richard Crowninshield went away with him in Frank's chaise. I did not see him again afterwards until now. Richard came home between eleven and twelve o'clock. I left Danvers next afternoon, Saturday. The will was to have been destroyed at the time of the murder. J. J. K. Jr. was to obtain the will, as he could get the keys of the trunk from the housekeeper.

I next saw the Crowninshields on the night of the 9th April,

at their own house, when Richard went off in a carriage—he said he was going to Lynn Mineral Springs. On the evening of the 9th, I went under the chamber window and spoke to George Crowninshield ; he asked who was with me. I told him no one, and asked him to come down. He came—he asked me if I had heard the news in Salem. I then went to Lynnfield, and left Cass's tavern that same night—afterwards I went to Providence —did not go to the eastward.

I saw George and Richard on the evening of the 27th, about 10 o'clock. I remained there two days—I had four five franc pieces, from Richard Crowninshield, Jr. I asked him for them. I went on the 23d to Lowell, thence to Boston and Roxbury, thence to Belfast by water with Capt. Boyle. At Belfast I wrote to Jo Knapp, under an assumed name. [The letter was here shown and acknowledged to have been written by Palmer.]

Benj. Lummus. Keeps a public house in Danvers—knows the prisoner at the bar—often called at his house in company with his brother Richard—don't know any thing about the murder than what he has read in the newspapers.

Thos. Hart corroborated the testimony of Leighton relative to having seen Frank Knapp and George Crowninshield at Joe Knapp's house, in Wenham.

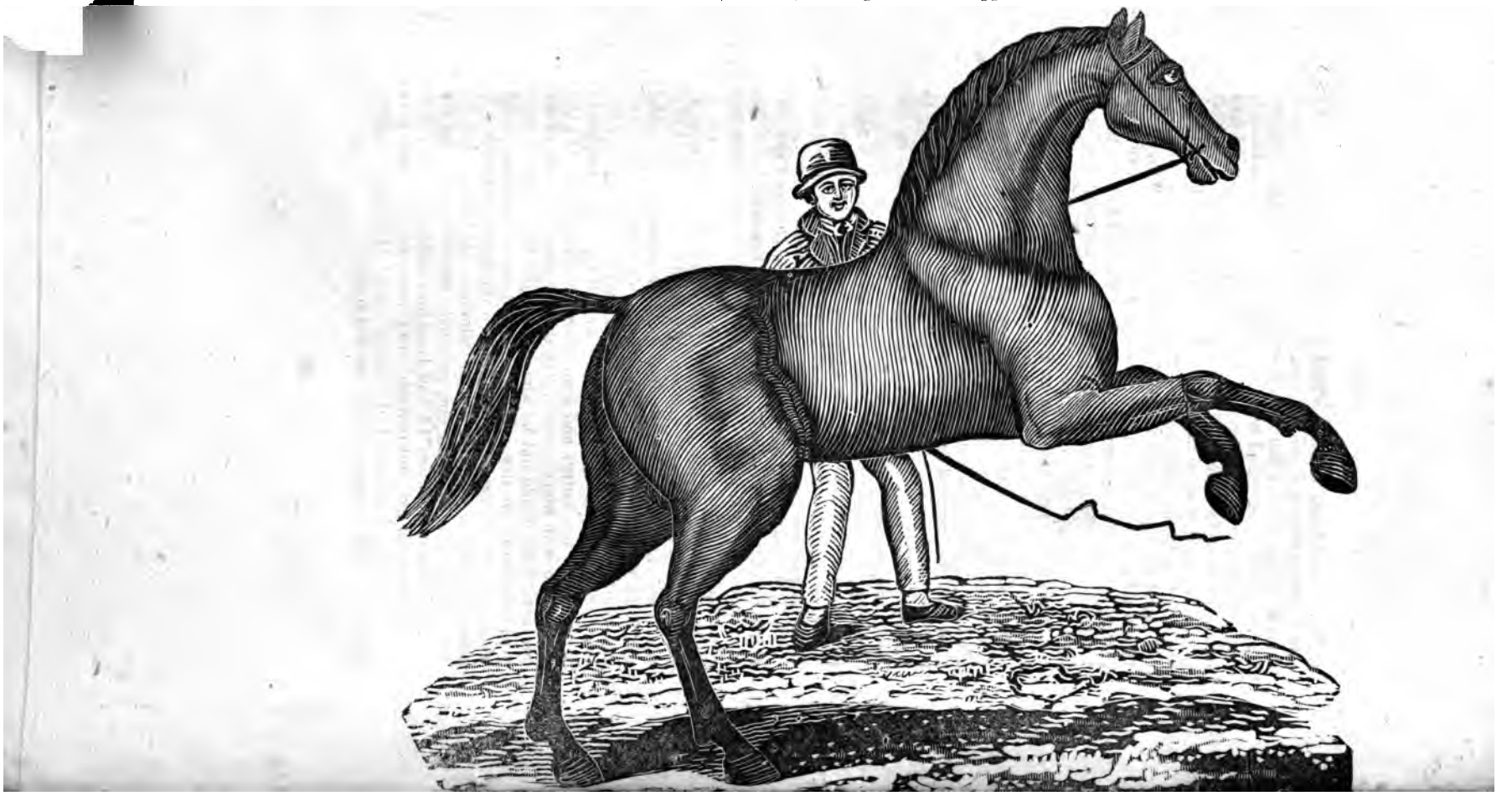
George Smith testified to having received a five frank piece from George Crowninshield the night previous to the murder.

John Felton also received two or three pieces of the same coin from the prisoner before the murder of Mr. White.

Richard Burnum testified to his having seen George Crowninshield on the night of the murder, near the Franklin buildings, was leaning against a post—did not speak to him—saw some one come up and speak ; don't know who.

Mary J. Weller, knows George Crowninshield. He slept at her house on the evening of the murder, and came in at half past ten. She found under his pillow in the morning a dirk. Did not think much of it at the time. The reason he gave for wearing a dirk was, that it once saved his life from a dangerous fellow. Mary ——— and I let him in at half past ten. He talked with her in the entry, and soon after the clock struck 11 ; he slept there with Mary ———. In the morning we heard of the murder. She would not let him go, nor did he incline to go—was sick the whole day. He told us not to mention any thing about the dirk, because he said that all the mischief which was done was laid to the two Crowninshields. At night, when he was called for, he went out, as usual. Sometimes he did not come in until between 12 and 1. Once as late 4. He never stayed there all day, but twice before ; once when it was very cold; the second time, he had a violent cold. Has seen him have a dirk, but don't know what he carried it for.

The celebrated Horse Nipcat, Capt. Frank Knapp's Favorite Steed.



Benj. S. Newhall testified to seeing George Crowninshield, the evening of the murder, about 10 o'clock, passing down Williams street.

Daniel Marston swore to receiving two five franc pieces from prisoner, the evening before his arrest.

William Osborne testified to letting horses to W. H. Allen and Frank Knapp.

Thomas W. Taylor testified to seeing prisoner pass his shop in Newbury street, the night of the murder. A man was with him.

Nehemiah Brown swore to finding Richard Crowninshield dead in his cell, after his suicide.

At this stage of proceedings, Mr. Hoar said it would be absurd to attempt to defend a case made out like this. There was not a tittle of evidence to criminate the prisoner, except that given by Palmer, which was altogether unworthy of credit. It was not a case weakly made out; but it was one not made out at all. Such a case ought not to be suffered to go to a jury.

The Court was of opinion that it could not interfere.

The *Attorney General* would not press the suit if the Court thought there was not a possibility and even a probability of conviction.

Mr. Shillaber said, it had been the design of the defendant's counsel to prove, that he was honestly engaged in the transaction of business relating to his mechanical trade, up to a late hour on the evening of the murder. Great part of the testimony introduced by the government, was the same they had intended to make use of. If the Court thought it necessary, they had one or two other witnesses to the same purport, which they would introduce to show that he was about his business. Mr. Shillaber did not wish to consume the time of the Court by making an annecessary argument, and would therefore call two witnesses in addition to those brought by the government, and on Monday morning his senior counsel would close the case.

The indictment and record of the conviction of John R. C. Palmer was then read, and Mr. *Babb* swore to Palmer's giving him a due bill, to which he affixed the signature of George Crowninshield.

The Court then adjourned to Monday morning.

Monday Morning.

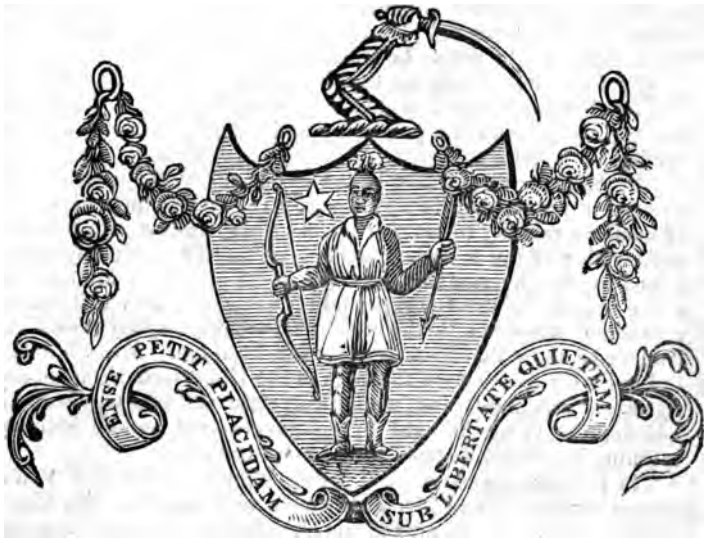
Mr. *Hoar* concluded the defence in a very able argument, which was followed by the Attorney General, who briefly and eloquently concluded the case on the part of the government.

Judge *Putnam* then charged the jury, and the case was committed to them about one o'clock. At half past two they came into Court, and rendered a verdict of NOT GUILTY.

When the foreman had pronounced the verdict, some disturb-

ance was made in Court, by the cheering of a portion of the spectators. Order was soon restored, however, and the presiding Justice stated, that a repetition of the offence would be followed by the severest punishment the court could inflict, upon as many of the offenders as could be detected.

Another indictment was then read, charging the prisoner with *misprision of felony*. His counsel was desirous of proceeding at once to the trial, but the Court deemed it improper to commit the case to the same jury which had just acquitted him upon another charge, and postponed the trial to the 23d inst. The prisoner was then ordered to recognise himself, with one surety, in the sum of five hundred dollars each, and was released.



APPENDIX.

THE CONFESSIONS.

The following is a correct correct copy of the Confession as originally written and identified by Rev. Mr. Coleman, and other witnesses. It was listened to with breathless attention by the crowded audatory, and several passages of which produced a

general shudder, and even some audible groans amongst the spectators.

FIRST CONFESSION.

Salem Jail, 29th May, 1830.

I mentioned to my brother, John Francis Knapp, in February last, that I would not begrudge one thousand dollars that the old gentleman, meaning Capt. Joseph White, of Salem, was dead. He asked me why. I mentioned to him that the old geutleman had a will, which if destroyed, half of the property would come on this side, that is, to my mother in law, Mrs. Beckford; that with the present will, the bulk of the property would go to Stephen White; that he had injured me in the opinion of the old gentleman, and I had no doubt had also prejudiced him against all the family, and that I thought it right to get the property if I could. I mentioned to him also in a joking way, that the old gentleman had often said he wished he could go off like a flash. We contrived how it could be done. One way was to meet him on the road, but the old gentleman was never out at night. Another was to attack him in the house, but Frank said he had not the pluck to do it, but he knew who would. I asked him who, and he said he would see George and Dick Crowninshield. I told him well; I did not think they would, but he could go and see. He got a chaise with Wm. H. Allen and went to their house, as he said, and proposed it to both of them. George declined going into the house, that is, Capt. White's house. But he said, as Frank reported, that he would meet him any where out doors, but would not go into the house. Dick said he would do it, if George would back him. George would not, but Dick appointed a night to meet Frank. They met two or three different times. Once at the Universalist Meeting House, as my brother said—once in South Salem, by the South Field Bridge, as I understood my brother, and once at the Salem Theatre—at the building, there was no play that night. At their meetings my brother Francis Knapp told him just what I had said. There was another meeting appointed at Salem Common for the 2d of April. I went on the Common that same evening, and met Richard Crowninshield at eight o'clock in the very centre of the Common. I told Richard Crowninshield how matters stood, and that I had taken the will of Capt. White either that day or the day before. I took the will out of his iron chest; it had the key in it; I turned the key and took it out—I told him what I would give him, that it should be just as my brother had represented, meaning that I would give him a thousand dollars if he would fix him, meaning Capt. White. Richard Crowninshield then showed me the tools he would do it with, which was a club and a dirk. The club was about two feet long, turned of hard wood, loaded at the end and very heavy. I presumed it was loaded,

and ornamented at the handle, that is, turned with beads at the end to keep it from slipping—I took hold of it, I think I lifted it. The dirk was about five inches long on the blade, having a white handle, as I think—it was flat, sharp at both edges, and tapering to a point. I do not know where he got the dagger, but he said he turned the club himself; I asked him if he were going that night, and told him what time the old gentleman went to bed generally, which was about ten, or a little before—he said no, he could not do it that night, that he must wait a little—he did not feel like it, because he was alone, and his brother would not back him—but he said he would meet my brother another time—I do not know what evening. It had got past nine, and I left and went home to Wenham. I kept the will one or two days in my chaise box, wrapped up in hay—it remained there until I heard of the murder, and then I burnt it. I came down on Sunday, and attended meeting. My brother said he saw Richard Crowninshield that evening at the bottom of the Common. The old gentleman (meaning Capt. White) went to Mrs. Stone's to tea that evening. My brother told Richard Crowninshield that Capt. White was up there, who said he would catch him there, if he, that is, Capt. White, did not come home before dark. He did come home before dark, and they were disappointed. He expected to meet him in Chestnut street, and my brother mentioned that Richard Crowninshield said he would dirk him in Chestnut street, if he met him. I went home Sunday night about dark. My brother came to the farm at Wenham, on the next Tuesday afternoon; I told him that my mother Beckford was at the farm, and was to pass the night; she had come up because Mrs. Davis wanted her assistance. I mentioned this to my brother, and told him he had better tell this to Richard Crowninshield. On the Friday preceding, I unbarred and unscrewed the window of Capt. White's house, closing the shutter again. My brother said he would inform Richard Crowninshield; my brother left the farm about tea time, with the chaise in which he came up; my brother made this remark as he went off, I guess he will go to-night.

The next morning, Wednesday 7th of April, Mr. Stephen White's man came up in his chaise and informed us that the old gentleman White was dead, and mother Beckford said she would go right down with him. My brother Frank came up to the farm that day about noon—he asked if we had heard the news; we told him yes, and how we heard it. After dinner he told me aside how it occurred. He said Richard Crowninshield met him, I think, in Brown-street, in Salem, about ten o'clock in the evening, and that he, Richard, left him and came round through the front yard, passed through the garden gate, pushed up the back window and got in by it; and passed through the entry, by

the front stairs into Capt. White's chamber; that he struck Capt. White with the club above named, while asleep, and after striking him he used the dirk, and hit him several times with the kirk, and covered him up, and came off, and met my brother again in Brown-street or by the Common, I think about eleven o'clock. He says Dick told him before he went in, if he saw any money there he meant to take it. When he came out my brother asked him if he had got it—he told him no, but he had fixed him. They separated and went home. This is all I know of the affair until I saw my brother again after he had seen Richard Crowninshield again. I came down to Salem on the afternoon of the 7th of April, and staid in Salem a fortnight; my brother informed me that he had seen Richard Crowninshield once or twice, and that Richard Crowninshield having seen the accounts of the number of stabs in the Newspapers, said that he had stabbed him but four times, and Richard Crowninshield remarked that he really believed there had been another person into the chamber, because he did not recollect making more than four or five stabs at the farthest.

A fortnight or three weeks after the murder, Richard Crowninshield rode up with my brother Frank to the farm in Wenham; he staid there a little while, and I gave him one hundred five franc pieces, which a few days before I had received from Guadaloupe, by Capt. Josiah Dewing. While Richard Crowninshield was at the farm, he told me the same story which my brother had done, and said that he had done the deed. He remarked that he was pretty short, and should want some more money soon. He mentioned that it was a great pity we had not got the right will, because he said if he had known it had been in there, he would have had it himself that night. Richard Crowninshield informed me that same evening, that he had put the club with which he killed Capt. White, under the Branch Meeting House steps; my brother went to look for it since, but could not find it. I suppose he did not look in the right place.

I wrote a letter, dated I think, the 12th of May, addressed to the Hon. Stephen White, at the house in Wenham, on Sunday morning, the 16th of May, signed either Grant or Claxton, and another addressed to the Hon. Gideon Barstow, signed either Grant or Claxton, I cannot tell which was which, which letters I brought to Salem, and gave them to Wm. H. Allen, who said he would put them in the Post Office, that evening. The purport of the letter addressed to the Committee was, that I, the person signing the letter, went into the chamber and struck old Mr. White on the head with a piece of lead, and that I pierced him or stabbed him three or four times with a dirk, and that Stephen White gave the finishing stroke; that he offered me five thousand dollars, and had not sent any part of it.

One of the letters was dated Lynn, I do not know which. The purport of the letter to Mr. White was that he must send me the five thousand dollars or suffer the consequences—I believe that was the amount of it—there were very few words. These letters I think were put into the office in the evening. William H. Allen was at our house two or three days afterwards, and told me that he had put them in. I do not think he knew the purport of them. I told him that I had received an anonymous letter and that this would brush off the effect of it.

I know nothing of Chase or Selman in this business. I know nothing of Palmer or Carr, nor ever heard any thing, until since I came into the Salem Gaol.

I, Joseph Jenkins Knapp, jr. now in Salem Gaol, on this twenty-ninth day of May, being Saturday, have given the foregoing confession relating to the murder of Joseph White, of Salem, to Henry Colman, minister of said Salem. It contains the truth, and nothing but the truth. It is given without compulsion, solicitation or bribe—and with no other promise from the said Coleman or any other person, than that of the Attorney General, shown me by said Coleman, promising to the individual who should make a full confession of the facts in the case, that he should be made a witness, and being made a witness, the Government pledge to him that he shall not be prosecuted for the offence. I déclare solemnly that no other proposition has been made by said Colman; and that I have engaged to him, to answer any other questions touching this subject, which may be addressed to me by competent authority, as far as my knowledge extends. In witness whereof I have hereunto affixed my proper name, and have also affixed it to every page of this confession, being nine times in the whole. (Signed) JOSEPH J. KNAPP, Jr.

Attest, (Signed) HENRY COLMAN.

Then appeared Joseph Jenkins Knapp, Jr. and in our presence, acknowledged that the statement by him subscribed as above, contains the truth, and nothing but the truth; the same having been fully and distinctly read to him aloud by us.

(Signed) GIDEON BARSTOW, STEPHEN C. PHILLIPS.

SECOND CONFESSION.

The second confession is almost a repetition of the first and we omit it.

SENTENCE
OF JOSEPH J. KNAPP, JR.

On Monday afternoon, before the jury to whom the case of George Crowninshield was committed came in with their verdict, Joseph Jenkins Knapp, Jr. was brought into Court, to receive the awful sentence of the law, which was pronounced with great solemnity and impressiveness by Judge Putnam, as follows:

JOSEPH JENKINS KNAPP, JR.

You have been regularly indicted, tried, and convicted as an accessory before the fact to John Francis Knapp, in the murder of Joseph White. You have had Counsel assigned at your request to assist in your defence, who have with great fidelity and ability urged all matters, whether of fact or of law,

which could be suggested—but after great consideration, the Jury of your own selection have found you guilty: and the Attorney General, in the name of the Commonwealth, hath demanded of the Court that the sentence of the law should now be passed against you. Upon an inquiry in that behalf, you have shown no cause or reason why the Court should not now comply with that demand.

Before we perform that duty, we are desirous of preparing your mind, so far as as it is in our power, to meet the tremendous doom which awaits you.

It is not to aggravate your sufferings, that we address you—for your present wretchedness excites feelings of compassion and not of indignation. But we hope that by presenting to your view some of the horrible circumstances which have attended the crime for which you are to suffer, we may lead you to sincere contrition and repentance.

The aged sufferer was a near relative to your wife. She was nurtured at his house, and loved and cherished by him as a child. You were admitted to partake of his hospitality—you availed yourself of the opportunities to visit at the house of the deceased, to prepare the way for the entrance of your hired assassin, to the bed chamber of the victim. You were for months deliberately occupied in devising the ways and means of his death. Horrible to think! while you were eating his bread, at his own table, you were plotting against his life. The execution of this awful conspiracy spread dismay, anxiety and distrust through the country. Week after week passed away—and left the dreadful deed veiled in mystery. At length a discovery was made by means almost as extraordinary as was the crime. If such events had been set forth in a work of fiction, they would have been considered as too absurd and unnatural for public endurance. The story would have been treated as a libel upon Man.

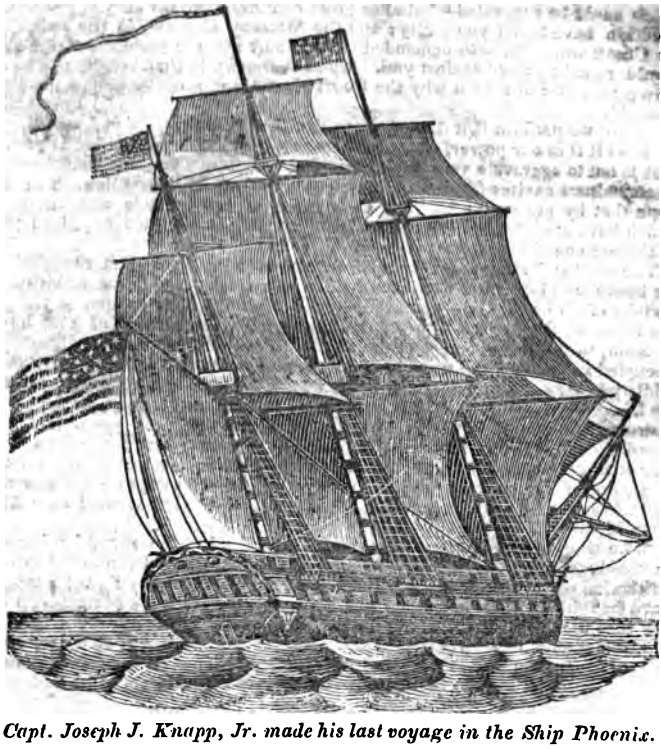
Who would have imagined that young, well educated men, having respectable connexions and means of living, could have been found in our cultivated society, ready to join in such a fearful conspiracy? Who would have imagined that the clue to the discovery, should have been given by one wholly unknown to the author and procurer of the murder, and that he himself should have put it into the hands of the friends of the deceased. Who that considers these things will fail to discover an overruling providence, which baffles all human devices and contrivances to conceal great and deadly crimes.

This murder was done with the greatest secresy—in the hour of night—by the hands of the assassin alone—who escaped from the house without discovery. The knowledge of the crime was confined to the breasts of the conspirators. But they could not keep it there, It would come out. And what was done in secret and in darkness is now by the conspirators themselves made manifest to the world.

One of these miserable men has perished by his own hand. The arm of justice has overtaken another, who has suffered an ignominious death, and the same penalty is about to be required of you, who were the abandoned author, contriver, and procurer, of the deed of death.

The wicked and profligate will note well these awful events. They will, they must see misery, disgrace, ignominy and death, following in quick retribution for the most secret crimes. While we present these dreadful events to your consideration, we would earnestly hope that you may be able to offer to the throne of grace, a broken and contrite heart. We beseech you to call to your aid those pious men, whose duty it is to teach the consolations of our holy religion. Under their direction and the assistance of the holy spirit, may you by prayer and penitence obtain the forgiveness of the God of mercy for your offences, and especially for the awful crime for which you are to suffer.

Our last duty remains to be performed, which is to pass the Sentence of the Law, for the crime of which you have been convicted, which sentence is, and this Court doth accordingly adjudge, that you are to be taken from hence to the prison from whence you came, from thence to the place of execution, and there be hanged by the neck until you shall be dead. And may God of his infinite grace have mercy upon your soul.



Capt. Joseph J. Knapp, Jr. made his last voyage in the Ship Phoenix.

THE GRAVE OF FRANK KNAPP.

Is near that of his victim, Capt. White, in the Burying Place, Salem.

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Trials of Capt. Joseph J. Knapp, Jr
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